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AA003

HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY

ARGENTINA: 1979 DEVELOPMENTS

SOURCE: Buenos Aires 2501

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafield, Director  
( ) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny  
Exemption(s): B/  
Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full  
(X) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to  
Date 7/21/01 Declassify on Reason 25X/

The following is a checklist of 1979 human rights developments in Argentina provided by Embassy Buenos Aires. As the Embassy has noted, insofar as there have been positive signs, they can be attributed at least in part to Argentine efforts in anticipation of the May 28-June 9 visit of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC).

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--Abductions: There has been a sharp drop in the number of abductions reported to the Embassy or human rights groups. Nine have been reported for January and none for either February or March. These figures, according to the Embassy, tend to confirm numerous reports that the government has ordered a halt to abductions and disbanded several counter-terrorist units.

--Prisoner treatment: According to a senior Ministry of the Interior source, the government will soon issue a uniform code of conduct and treatment covering all criminal and political prisoners. (INR Note: [ ] sources have consistently pointed to the absence of such a code as one of the sources of prisoner mistreatment.)

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--Reducing PEN roles: Interior Ministry officials stated to an Embassy officer that his intent to reduce the number of executive or (PEN) prisoners to 1,800 by the time the IAHRC arrives. Published figures show a net release of

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184 individuals from PEN status ~~in~~ between January 1 and March 25 (208 removed; 24 added), leaving the Embassy's count of acknowledged executive detainees at 2,689.

--Juridical activity: Two important 1979 Supreme Court actions have encouraged human rights advocates. In one case, the Court ordered the Army to return to judicial custody an Army NCO who had been under <sup>civilian</sup> detention for threatening a civilian with his pistol; the Army complied. In the other case, the Court for the first time ordered a lower court to ~~undertake~~ <sup>investigate</sup> an investigation of a disappearance case that was the subject of a habeas corpus writ. Less promising has been an apparent tendency of federal courts to back away from ~~their~~ earlier willingness to order the release of PEN prisoners when the executive branch could not provide ~~evidence of~~ "reasonable" evidence for their detention.

--Prisoner mistreatment: February produced three cases of ~~alleged~~ alleged prisoner mistreatment. According to reports that reached [ ] from other prisoners, one person disappeared B) from prison and has not been relocated; another was taken from (custody handed over to security unit) his cell/and tortured while being interrogated; and a third died as a result of beatings by guards.

--Groups targeted by security agents: Reports reaching the Embassy reveal that two groups have been the object of consistent security force attention since late 1978. Since September 1978, leaders and members of the Relatives of Persons Detained and Disappeared for Political Reasons (linked to Argentine Communist Party) have been abducted and subjected to bomb attacks.

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(PST)  
Members of the Socialist Workers' Party have recieved  
similar treatment since late October 1978, ~~with~~ with the  
most recent abductions having occurred <sup>least</sup> in January, ~~1979~~  
~~According to SA~~ According to sources considered fairly  
reliable by the Embassy, over 20 ~~PS~~ PST members have been  
abducted in various cities, and most have been beaten and  
some tortured. Thus far, ~~none of these~~ members of the two  
groups who have been abducted can be accounted for, ~~in~~  
i.e., none are yet listed as "disappeared."

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